**Toby (Paster) Rossner**

**PROVIDENCE** - a longtime resident of Providence's East Side and an early resident of Cranston's Chapel View, died on July 13 at age 83 while at Tamarisk Assisted Living in Warwick, RI with complications of dementia after many difficult years that she endured with amazing dignity and grace.

She was born and raised in the Saint Louis area, educated at theUniversity of Chicago as a mathematician, and also trained/recognized afterward as a children's/academic Judaica librarian who traveled as far asAfrica and Israel in pursuit of service and development; but the program of the RISDMuseum was one of the dearest causes of her later years, to which she dedicated much time, effort, enthusiasm, insight, and talent as both a collector and a 'touring' docent while she was able.

The formidable character, intelligence, taste, strength, energy, work ethic, and kindness of this radiant soul always reminded her family members that they should consider themselves the luckiest people in the world. Filled with endless gratitude to have intimately shared her remarkable life, they rejoice now in that abiding privilege even as they mourn her unfathomable disappearance "into that good night".

She is survived by her husband Lawrence (LFR), to whom she introduced magic and joy and devine destiny (bashert) when they were both only fifteen years old and who is now retired from academia and Government service, by seven children/grandchildren (Rebecca, Marc, and Michael/Hannah, Gabriela, Jack, and Daniel), all of whom call California's Bay Area home, by two brothers (Phillip James Paster and Benjamin Guy Paster), both of whom are retired from the practice of law and also reside elsewhere, and by nieces/nephews/cousins/in-laws, all of whom are thankful for the expert and loving care she received at Tamarisk from that staff and also from the staff of the Hulitar Hospice in her last few days.

In trying to comprehend a life of accomplishment so dedicated, nonetheless, to loved ones it is tempting to borrow freely from Aristotle and others: "What is love? …a single soul dwelling in two bodies…". No memorial to Toby's passing is planned for now. But the gift of her radiant soul still dwells within all whom she loved and will continue to sustain them against the grief of her loss; that is her enduring memorial. Any charitable donations in her memory by friends and colleagues should be directed to the RISDMuseum Docents Angel Fund, to the Phyllis Siperstein Tamarisk Assisted-Living 'Renaissance'Memory Unit, or to the historic Hulitar Hospice of RI.

(On amuch more personal note, the best thing that anyone will ever know about me is that one beautiful summer day in Madison, WI in 1959 Toby agreed to marry me. And it will not surprise anyone that she gave me all of the best days of my life. The first of these came even earlier, the day that I met her. I had taken a seat at the back of a big, yellow school bus and was waiting for a ride to a summer event with a bunch of senior high school classmates. I had boarded that bus ahead-of-time so that I could maintain my 'cool' as I seatedmyself strategically to look over all of the girls who soon followed me aboard. All were gorgeous; but none really stood out until a girl climbed aboard whose glowing personality seemed to fill the bus and, by some miracle, made it explode with light. I am both puzzled and delighted by the memory of that vibrant and transcendant experience to this day. That was Toby's first of so many such gifts to me.

But it might surprise some that the last of these days came only after Toby entered the care of Tamarisk almost four years ago when her condition became too difficult to address effectively without considerable sustained professional help. Tamarisk was very generous about providingmuch in the way of diversion for its residents and their visitors. On the day in

question Tamarisk offered a performance of Pucini's La Boheme on video. Although neither Toby nor I had been grand opera 'fans' in general, Pucini was always the exception. So I accompanied her to the large room designated for that purpose to find that, apart fromher, only a few others of the many residents had chosen to attend this relatively exotic event. By then Toby had been left physically contorted and almost silent, confined to a wheel chair and often agitated, with the perpetual, soft, Mona Lisa smile that had dazzled me endlessly since I was fifteen years old now replaced by an almost permanent grimace. However, as the recording started to play, her squinting eyes opened wide once again, her face assumed the smile that had not been seen for so long, and her recent agitation miraculously dissolved as she chose to sit quietly and hold my hand in relaxed composure and delight for about two hours. The charm of that experience passed soon after the recording ended, but I will remember it forever and will remain grateful for the total enchantment brought to us at Tamarisk one more time under such trying circumstances. It really doesn't get much better than that. LFR)

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